

Shah Husain

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SHAH HUSAIN

HARJINDER SINGH DHILLON



Sahitya Akademi

Sahitya Akademi
Rabindra Bhavan
35, Ferozeshah Road
New Delhi 110 001

Sales Section
Swati, Mandir Marg
New Delhi 110 001

Regional Offices
Jeevan Tara Building, 4th Floor
23A/44X, Diamond Harbour Road
Calcutta 700 053

172, Mumbai Marathi Grantha Sangrahalaya Marg
Dadar, Mumbai 400 014

Central College Campus,
Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Veedhi,
Bangalore 560 001

Chennai Office
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Life and Times of Shah Husain

Not much authentic information regarding Shah Husain a renowned Panjabi Sufi poet of the 16th century A.D. is available though he has been briefly mentioned in a few books such as *Hasnatul Arifin*, *Khazinatul Asfia*, *Hakikatul-Auliya* and *Bagh-i-Auliya-i-Hind* written in Persian between 17th to 19th centuries A.D.

Shah Husain was born in 1538 A.D. in Lahore. His father Sheikh Usman was then a wool weaver. Shah Husain was a promising child. When barely seven years old, he had learnt six chapters of the Holy Qur'an by heart and at the age of ten years, Hafiz Abu Bakr, a great religious man was appointed his teacher. Sufi saint Hazarat Behlol kindled the spiritual light in him. By the time he attained the age of twentysix years, he had studied the literature of other religions and had gained spiritual awareness. During this period he meditated at the *dargah* of Data Ganj Bakhsh on the bank of river Ravi and enjoyed the company of many Sufi *faqirs*. Hereafter, he lived a life of detachment concentrating his different faculties only on Almighty Allah.

Shah Husain was a contemporary of Guru Ram Dass and Guru Arjun Dev (4th and the 5th Sikh Gurus) and of Akbar and Jahangir (the Mughal emperors). This was the period of political upheaval. In the year 1526 A.D. Lodhi rule had come to an end. The atmosphere of religious intolerance and political tyranny was on the wane. The mughal emperor Babur had ruled only for four years and most of

the time he was engaged in battles and establishing his administration. At the time of his death, he looked back at his deeds and dissuaded his son Humayun from discriminating between Islam and other religions. This was the only way to please the non-Muslims. In fact he had realised that the main reason of the Lodhis becoming unpopular with the masses was their unsympathetic and fanatic attitude towards non-Muslims.

Humayun could not do much in this regard but Sher Shah Suri laid the foundation of religious tolerance on the basis of his political experiences. Though he did not waive taxes on non-Muslims, even then he came to forge better relations with them. Since he was not a religious zealot, Todar Mal and other Hindus enjoyed place of prominence in his court.

In the year 1556 A.D. Akbar took the reign of the mughals. There was no religious discrimination and an era of tolerance started. This had a wholesome influence on the country. Even Bhakti movement and Sufi movement were influenced by it. Political and social environment of the time also influenced Shah Husain.

During this period, Bhakti and Sufi movements had gained popularity with the masses in Panjab. They found the preachings of the Sufis and teachings of the Sikh Gurus alike. Both advocated belief in oneness of God. They were builders of ethical values among humanity. For this they preached generosity, good actions, humility and gentleness. They were of the firm belief that by adopting such moral values, a healthy society could be established.

Being a contemporary of Guru Arjun Dev, Shah Husain was influenced by the writing of the Sikh Gurus. This is amply borne out by his Kafis some of which in words and thought-content are akin to the compositions of the Sikh Gurus. This shows that Shah Husain was free of religious orthodoxy. That is why the Muslims, the Hindus and the Sikh enjoy equally the melodious spirit of his Kafis. His

Kafis are full of divine love and yearning of the soul to be one with Allah. They are a mirror unto his life and personality. On the whole, Shah Husain lived in such a religious and political environment as was congenial to his liberal expression.

As per tradition of the Sufi saints, a number of legends and miracles are associated with him. The story of Madho Lal, a Hindu disciple of Shah Husain and Bhai Prema, a devotee of the Sikh Gurus points to this effect. Such legends or stories of miraculous powers of Sufi faqirs do not find favour with the modern rational mind. Nevertheless, they suggest the love and respect the Sufi faqirs enjoyed among the folk. Shah Husain being a Sufi of Malamati order was far away from the wordly pleasures. He avoided mixing with people so as not to get disturbed in his prayers. He shaved his head and would indulge in wayward acts, so that people began to hate him. Despite all this Shah Husain was revered as a great Sufi saint.

Shah Husain passed away at the age of 63 years at Shahdara, (near Lahore in Pakistan) on the bank of river Ravi. His followers built a mausoleum there but after thirteen years when there was a heavy flood in the Ravi, the mortal remains of Shah Husain were shifted to a grave at Bagbanpura (then known as Babupura).

When Shah Husain breathed his last, he had an immense following. He was so popular with the people that two annual fairs were held on his tomb. One was known as fair of *Charagan* which was held in the month of February/March and the other one was on *Basant Panchami* in February. Maharaja Ranjit Singh a nineteenth century Sikh ruler of Panjab used to participate in the *Basant Panchami* fair at his tomb. All ranks of his army wore yellow dress on that day and the tents on the tomb of Shah Husain also used to be of yellow colour. From the fort of the Maharaja to the tomb of Shah Husain, the whole passage was a riot of colour high and the low attired alike in yellow. Maharaja

Ranjit Singh used to visit the tomb of Shah Husain with his well-dressed army men and offered Rs. 1100/- and one shawl of yellow colour. People from all walks of life, the rich and the poor had great reverence for Shah Husain. No wonder his *Kafis*, full of divine love and inspiration as they are, find favour with even the modern reader.

Sufism and Shah Husain

Islamic mysticism is known as Sufism. In early days of its development, ascetic and quietistic tendencies dominated and some great personalities of those days such as Hasan of Basra (d. 728 AD), Ibrahim Ibn Adham (d. 777 AD) and Rabe'A-Al-Adawiya of Basra (d. 801 AD) made valuable contribution to its growth. Mecca-Madina, Basra and Kufa were the main centres of the ascetic movement. Sufis of earlier times were the followers of Qur'an and Hadith. They believed in self-mortification and meditation and in leading a life of contentment and purification. Repentance, abstinence, renunciation, poverty, patience and trust in Allah were the milestones on their way to the house of God.

After gaining sufficient strength from asceticism, Sufism moved into the realm of mysticism in the 9th century AD. Christianity, Neoplatonism, Buddhism and Indian Vedanta had developed their own philosophical structure by that time and had some influence on Sufism but Sufism based its philosophy purely on the religious scriptures of Islam—The Qur'an and Hadith. Sufism is Islamic in letter and spirit and has its roots in Middle East countries. It was a natural development within Islam, owing little to non-Muslim sources. Sufi refers to that person who is a follower of Islam, believes in One God—Allah, Prophet Mohammad and Qur'an. The word 'Sufi' has never been used for non-Muslim mystics.

During the 9th and the 10th century AD, Sufism had

developed into a full fledged philosophical movement. Rabe A. introduced the concept of 'Selfless Love' (Ishq) and Dhu'L-Nun Misri made it popular among the Sufis. He also introduced the idea of 'Gnosis' (m'arifa) and analysed the doctrine of 'Tauhid'. He classified the stages of 'Spiritual development'. Ma'ruf-al-Karkhi propagated the importance of 'Grace' and Abu Yazid-Al-Bistami introduced the concept of 'Passing away in God' (Fana). Al Junaid of Baghdad made it popular and acceptable to Muslim mystics. By the end of the 10th century AD. Sufism had grown into a great mystical movement in Islam and great saints and mystics had enriched this system with their oral and written instructions.

Sheikh Ali Ul-Hujwiri (known as Data Ganj Bakhsh in the Panjab) was a great Sufi philosopher of the 11th century AD. His book *Kashf-al-Maljub* written in Persian was the first treatise on Sufism and he introduced Sufism to the people in Panjab. He emphasised that the real explanation of Islam could be found in Sufi philosophy.

During the 12th century A.D. Sufi *silsilas* came into being. They played an important role in popularising and propagating Sufism. With the help of these *silsilas*, Sufi, mysticism reached every corner of the muslim and non-muslim world. During this short period, a large number of people came into the fold of great Sufi teachers. The aim of these *silsilas* was that the followers of Islam should concentrate on their innerself rather than follow the religious dogmas blindly. They taught them the way to purify their hearts so that they might be able to peep into it which was considered to be the seat of God. The Sufi *silsilas* which gained prominence in India were the Chishtiyya, the Suhrawardiyya, the Qadiriyya, the Naqshbandiyya and the Malamatiyya. The founders and protagonists of these *silsilas* placed Sufism on firm mystical ground and gave it an organised shape. These *silsilas* made the Sufi movement meaningful among the Muslims and non-Muslims.

When Shah Husain emerged on the scene of Panjab, Sufi poetry had fully developed in its thought content. Baba Sheikh Farid, the most popular saint of the Chishtiyya *silsila* of the 12th and 13th century AD. was a pioneer of Sufi movement in Panjab and his 112 *slokas* and 4 *sabadas* were included in the Adi Granth of the Sikhs by Guru Arjun Dev, the 5th Sikh Guru. Baba Farid propagated selfless love for God who was present everywhere and in every human heart. He based his ideas on the holy Qur'an. For him, phenomenal world was short lived and man must detach himself from it and surrender before God. Sufism is nothing but cleansing of the heart. It is spiritual in substance. He keeps his spiritual journey clean by self-mortification and austerity. He believes that the love of the world is the major cause of all sins. Accordingly a person who derives pleasure in contemplation on Almighty is of a high spiritual status. Detachment and renunciation are two major factors which help a Sufi to continue his spiritual flight, helping him in cleansing the heart.

Baba Sheikh Farid advocated a life of purity. He advised his followers to wipe out pride, arrogance, anger, jealousy and hatred from their heart. He wanted to inculcate in them the moral qualities which would help them attain the ultimate goal. To achieve this, Baba Farid felt the need of a spiritual guide who is considered to be perfect and illumined personality. Such a person is gifted with spiritual power and brings a change in the inner world of his disciple. Baba Farid is aware that without the guidance of a perfect *shaykh* who is a guide, man does not reach anywhere.

In Sufism, constant contemplation on God is most important as it helps in cleansing the heart. It creates love in the heart of the searcher and what remains there is just God. In such a situation a Sufi considers everything belonging to the world false and perishable.

In Islam remembrance of God is obligatory. A true

mystic cannot overlook it, for it leads to the integration of the heart and the tongue. In Sufism it is not only a ritual or a religious act but an act through which a Sufi unites himself with God. Baba Farid was of the opinion that only through prayer or remembrance of God, one can reach one's destination. Through this act, a person learns to concentrate all his energies i.e. physical, mental and spiritual on God alone. He forgets everything of this phenomenal world except God.

As the Sufi movement moved ahead in Panjab, it gained sufficient strength and influenced a large section of people.

The period between Sheikh Baba Farid and Shah Husain is almost unproductive insofar as Sufi poetry is concerned. There is a gap of about three hundred years between these two Sufi poets. Though there are some Sufi poets whose names do figure in the movement, their contribution to Panjabi language and literature is negligible.

Shah Husain got a rich religious and mystical tradition propounded by his predecessors in the form and thought content. He knew that the writings of the Sufis had power of transforming the inner and outer personality of a man. Before Shah Husain different ideas and concepts had taken roots in Sufism and Shah Husain contributed a lot to make them more effective and meaningful.

Shah Husain was of the opinion that the phenomenal world attracted man's attention. He knew that such a world was to perish one day. According to him, worldly relations were without any firm foundation and could break any moment. None could escape His mighty will.

Like Baba Sheikh Farid, Shah Husain also propagated the necessity of a guide who played an important role in the spiritual upliftment of a man. Shah Husain made man conscious of worldly sins and vices. In Sufi philosophy, a person without a guide was likely to fall prey to Iblis. When a Sufi started 'dying to self' he began to feel the presence of God. It was achieved through prayer only and it helps

in self-mortification and transmutation. Whereas Baba Sheikh Farid had laid stress on five times prayer during the day to be observed in a mosque, Shah Husain wanted his followers to pray as many times a day as possible. In fact later Sufis, especially Shah Husain, were more particular about the inner activities of a person. Though none of the Sufis could go against the Islamic religious law i.e. Shariat, Shah Husain concentrated more on innerself. According to him, the main aim of man's life was to continue his spiritual journey to the house of God and be with Him in the end. To achieve this, religious rituals did not play any role in Shah Husain's philosophy. When a person performed an outer act devoid of his internal activities, he got lost in the mist of the world and a veil of ignorance falling before his eyes. When a Sufi concentrated on his inner activities, he got purified and was able to illumine his inner-world enabling to identify himself with his lost home and becoming free from all that was evil. By now he was supposed to have renounced the worldly wealth and worldly desires as well. A Sufi for Husain was one who had purified his heart for God, the person who needed Him and Him alone.

Shah Husain was a *malamati* Sufi and wanted to keep the public away from him so that he could pray and meditate undisturbed. He believed in moral transformation of the soul through the extinction of all its passions and desires.

Sufism is altogether a self-discipline—it is to possess nothing and to be possessed by nothing. It is a moral disposition. For this Shah Husain advocates poverty which is only the beginning of Sufism. This means renunciation of all worldly things for the sake of Almighty. The highest type of morality is born in love and Shah Husain believes that the object of man's love is God who resides in him. His Kingdom is within man's heart. Love of God means renunciation and self-sacrifice—giving up wealth, honour, will, life for God's pleasure. A Sufi does not seek any kind of

reward for his love. In fact, love has not been used in an ordinary sense in Sufism. It has a rather specific connotation. Islam in itself is the religion of love and Shah Husain feels that Divine Love is beyond description. It can be said that love is the divine instinct of the soul and Shah Husain wanted to enjoy the sweetness of such a love.

To realize it, grace of the Lord is necessary. Human steps without divine grace cannot travel over this path. At this stage the spirit of the Sufi is stripped of all kinds of worldly relations. When the spirit is illuminated with divine qualities it feels peace. It negates all goals, destroys his pride and egotism, closes his eyes to all kinds of worldly attachments, passions and lusts. Only the divine love has the power to weed out all those things which impede his spiritual journey.

Shah Husain believes that when divine qualities become a part of Sufi's innerself, he is established not an ordinary person. His whole inner world is illumined with God's love and qualities. He feels proximity to God and is disinterested in everything except God.

Shah Husain had inherited a very rich legacy of Sufi ideas and he popularized this movement among the masses. He kept the flame of Sufism burning in the hearts of Muslims and non-Muslims alike, forbidding them to become slave of their mortal being.

The writings of Shah Husain are a mirror unto his inner world and he wants that everybody should lead a pious life. The ideas and concepts of Sufism which Shah Husain inherited were quite clear and had become important during its long journey. It helped to unite the masses especially the Muslims into the mystic fold.

Following in the footprints of his predecessors, Shah Husain made the Sufi movement more vigorous. He was of the opinion that man's ultimate goal in life was to get to the nearness of God. To achieve this, he had to struggle throughout his life with his inner and outerself. When he

was able to defeat his animal soul he reached closer to divine kingdom. Shah Husain, therefore, advised man to make a consistent and continuous effort, that would unite him with the Almighty ending his spiritual journey in eternal peace.

Shah Husain—A Malamati Sufi

In the development of Islamic mysticism, Sufi orders played an important role. These orders were of religious and mystic nature. They brought a large number of Muslims into their fold in a very short time. Each order had its own *pir* or *guru* preceptor, who was venerated in his lifetime and had a respectable place in the hearts of his followers.

Margoliouth in his book entitled *Mohammedanism* says that “probably the newest order of any considerable importance is the Melami, which takes its name from a word meaning ‘blame’ and is said to refer to willingness to incur blame in the cause of God. The adherents of this order are said to distinguish themselves by neglect of external ceremonies and rites”.

B. J. A. Subhan is of the view that the first saint to follow the path of Malamatiyya was Dhun Nunu'l Misri and it was his disciple Hamdunu'l Qassar who founded the Malamati *silsila*. The followers of this order are considered to be free thinkers.

We can say that the word ‘malamati’, as it is used, is derived from ‘malamat’, ‘blame’ and signifies one who is blameworthy. The term has been generally applied to the saints of this order as indicating that they stood in a special relation to God, and in consequence were not subject to the Divine Ordinances. It was used by them for a mode of life sometimes adopted by the Sufis to cloak their sanctity. It is considered that the malamati is one whose veins

are saturated with the nourishment of pure virtue, who is sincere and who does not want to be acquainted with his ecstatic state and experiences.

Malamat does not mean that one should disobey the Islamic Sharia and lead a life of disbeliever and that people should hate him, rather it means that one should do good actions while carrying on one's spiritual journey to the house of Lord. One should not be afraid of this world in any way. Shah Husain, a Malamati Sufi, discards worldly fame. He has an unflinching faith in One God. Religions are no barriers for him.

Shah Husain believes in humility and powerlessness of man. While living in the world, he detaches himself from worldly life. He concentrates all his powers only on Allah. He does not exhibit his spiritual enlightenment and power but meditates on Allah in solitude so that he may be able to do his spiritual exercise without any disquiet or disturbance. He believes in concealing his inner power and purity. It is said about the *malamatis* that they are the best servants of Allah. So is Shah Husain. People may hate him because he does not lead life of codified Islam. Instead, he is busy in his meditation or Zikr-i-Allah. Sufis like him, are considered to be independent of any religious dogma.

Malamat Sufis are considered to be pure of heart and while treading the path to the Divine journey they do not bother about the sneers of the people. They keep themselves busy in purification of their inner-selves and pass their maximum time in remembrance of God. Shah Husain, being a *Malamati* Sufi, neither exhibits the goodness of his inner world, nor conceals his shortcomings. He keeps himself away from worldly fame and importance. He may have an irreligious exterior but in reality he is truly religious. He does not follow religious traditions for the obvious reason that he wants the hatred of the people to encourage him to spend more time in remembering God. Shah Husain believes that if he shuns the temptations of

this material world, he would be nearer God. To elucidate this concept, an incident from the life of a famous Sufi saint, Abu Yazid Al-Bestami may be quoted. It is said that after Abu Yazid had visited Medina, an order came to him to return to look after his mother. Accordingly, accompanied by a throng, he set out for Bestam. The news ran through the city, and the people of Bestam came out to welcome him a good way from the town. Abu Yazid feared that their attentions would detract him from God. Consequently, as they approached him, he drew a loaf out of his sleeve. Though it was the month of Ramzan yet he stood and ate the loaf. As soon as the people of Bestam saw this, they turned away from him. It may be pertinent to suggest here that since Abu Yazid was on his journey, the religious code of Roza was not binding on him.

In fact, the Sufis are the blacksmiths of their souls. Therefore, they use self-blame as their hammer. They look upon their souls as a mirror, a mirror which they polish with godly service and obedience. In this way they purify and cleanse their innerself from the mist of the worldly passions and lusts.

Being a Malamati Sufi, Shah Husain tries to be low and inferior in the eyes of the world by shaving his head and moving among the people in inebriate state. Thus he is more concerned with his innerself or spiritual enlightenment than with following the religious or outer code of Muslim life.

Shah Husain is the only Panjabi Sufi poet who is associated with the *Malamati* order. Being a true Sufi, Shah Husain was always in search of God throughout his life. The main aim of his *silsilah* like other Sufi *silsilas* was to bridge the gap between God and man and achieve the stage of *Fana* and *Baqa* (annihilation of the self).

Shah Husain believes that realisation of the self is very important in the way of spiritual progress. Worldly passions and lusts keep a person away from his spiritual

goal. When a man is overpowered with his *nafs* he is unable to enjoy the divine beauty. He must disassociate himself from immoral attachments. Shah Husain says :

*App nū pachhān bandē
Je tudh āpnā āpp pachhātā
Sahib nū milan āsaan Bandē.*

(Know thyself o man,
By knowing thyself,
Easy would be to meet the Lord.)

When a man is awakened spiritually, he feels fulfilled. Realisation of self is very difficult because it is achieved after a hard spiritual labour. One has to discard everything from the self except God. A Sufi *salik* (seeker) whose inner self is illumined with divine light and is able to defeat anti-spiritual forces, establishes himself as representative of the divine.

Shah Husain wants to lead a detached life. That is why he prefers to be a *faqir* or a *darvish*. A *faqir* is considered to be the poorest of the poor. He neither runs after wealth nor exhibits any association with wealthy people. This status is achieved only with divine grace. In Sufi philosophy adoption of *faqiri* is the foundation of spiritual journey. Shah Husain says :

*Mastak jināh de paī faqīrī
bhāg tināh de changāi.*

(How lucky are those, whom fate doth bring, to the gates of the humble poverty)

To be a *faqir* is to accept poverty, renunciation, patience and satisfaction. He enjoys the sweetness of divine love which is beyond the reach of worldly people. Shah Husain says :

*Mandī hān ke changī hān
Bhī sahib terī bandī hān.
Gehlā lok jāne dīvanī
Main rang sahib de rangī hān.*

(May I be good or bad, still I am your, O Lord,

A poor hand maiden to thee whom people take as mad,
And who in fact is dyed in rich and brilliant dyes.
Of thee and thine O Lord.)

Shah Husain considers God's meditation as a medium for spiritual power. The world is short-lived. One should not be proud of one's wealth. *Nafs* (ego) keeps a man away from his spiritual goal, and man should try to overpower his *nafs*. To defeat one's *nafs* is to gain spiritual progress. Shah Husain says :

Khudī takabārī bandiā chod dē
Tun pakar halīmī.
Gor nimānī nū tun yād kar
Terā watan kadīmī.

(O mortal man be meek and leave aside all pride;
remembering ever, the grave, your last abode, eternal).

According to Shah Husain those people are great who live in the world as God wills them to. For him, the world is the source of all vices. He feels that the spirit of man gets contaminated in the world. He wants to keep himself away because he does not want to become spiritually handicapped. He says :

Jahan dekho tahan kapt hai
kahoon nā paio chain
Dagābāz sansār te
Goshā pakar Husain.

(Where ever you cast a glance, you meet all fraud and restlessness, O you Husain *faqir*, rest yourself all immune in a nook from this cheating world).

By living in seclusion, Shah Husain wants to gather his spiritual wealth. He does not want to exhibit his spiritual power among the people. He wishes to enjoy God's love and be one with him. He knows that *Shariah* (religious code) keeps man's activities confined to his external actions and these activities in no way help a man in his inner or spiritual realization. Internally he is devoid of God's *ishq* (love). When a Sufi establishes his rapport with God, his behaviour becomes indifferent to the world. Peo-

ple criticise and start hailing him for his indifferent and irreligious actions. But Shah Husain intentionally goes on with such behaviour :

*Rahie vo nāl sajjan dē rahie vo.
Lakh lakh badian te sau tñhne
Sabo sir te sahie vo.*

(A thousand taunt for me, and numberless abuses,
But I would still be clinging to the apron of my groom).

There are a number of verses which show that Shah Husain belongs to *malamati* order of the Sufis. A complete *kafi* refers to his being a *malamati*. He says :

*Jeti jeti dunyā Ramji
Tere kolon mangdī.
Kūndā dein sotā dein
Kothī devin bhāng dī
Sāfi dein mirchā dein
Be mīntī dein rang dī
Post dein, bātī dein
Chāñī dein khāñd dī
Gyāñ dein, dhyañ dein
Melīmā sādhu sang dī
Shāñī Husain faqir snāñ dā
Eh duae malang dī.*

(All beg from Thee O Lord, I also beg of Thee; A house of dry hemp leaves, The where-withal to prepare and grind them for the drink; A cloth to stain, with pepper and colouring, some. This I that I beg of Thee. Give me some poppy blossom, A dish and a bag of sugar, with this bestow on me, Inner vision and meditation, with courage to entertain, *faqirs* and mystics pure. Husain Thy begging *faqir*, doth beg of Thee O Lord.)

Shah Husain gives details of such things as are used by the *malamatis* and due to this people hate them and keep themselves away from them. In the above *kafi*, he has used two words 'knowledge' and 'concentration' and those are considered to be very important in spiritual field, and with a definite meaning and concept. He prays to the Lord for divine knowledge. The company of the wise and the saints, gives him spiritual satisfaction.

Every Sufi, may be of any Sufi *silsila*, aims at attainment of oneness with the Almighty. For this attainment every Sufi order exhorts its followers to follow certain rules of that particular *silsila*. Shah Husain belongs to that Sufi *silsila* which is considered to be unique in certain characteristics. He also wants to unite with his Lord on the basis of his spiritual enlightenment. In other words he enjoys the company of his Lord and feels elated :

*Tusin ral mil deho mumārkhān
Merā sohnā sajjan ghar āyā hī.*

(Come gather around me all join to give me blessings, my love has come to me.)

*Kahe Husain faqir nimānū
Murshid dost milāyā hī.*

(My Murshid has it so joined This Friend of mine with me, so sayeth Husain faqir).

and

*Māhī māhī kūkdī
Main āpe Rānjhan hoī
Rānjhan Rānjhan mainū sabhī koī ākhio
Hīr nā ākhio koī.*

(Let me be called, by each, by the name of Ranjah, dear and none address me as Heer. I have become the Ranjah, by calling so oft on Him).

In Panjabi Sufi poetry the enjoyment of unitive state has been depicted as short-lived. That is why most of Panjabi Sufi poetry deals with spiritual separation and feeling of furtherance from the Lord. This poetry is the yearning of the soul to bathe in the fountain of love of the Lord eternally.

Sufi Philosophy and Shah Husain

The basis of Sufi philosophy is the holy Qur'an and Hadith. Hadith are the teachings of Prophet Muhammad outside Qur'an. The basic philosophy of the Muslims is *Tauhid*. It is an Arabic word which literally means 'to make into', 'to unify', 'to conclude that something is one', 'to declare that God is one'. His essence and His qualities are unique and marvellous. He has no partner in His actions. He is independent of all. Those who have faith in Him and have knowledge, do believe in His unity. In Qur'an Allah has declared that "Your God is One God" (Qur'an, II : 163)

Shah Husain's main contribution to Panjabi Sufi poetry is in the form of *Kafi*. He fully believes in *Tauhid*. He knows that the whole structure of Islamic way of life and Sufi philosophy is raised on this pillar of Islamic faith.

Shah Husain believes that when one concentrates all one's energies and faculties on One God and establishes *Ishq* with Him, one starts following His teachings in daily life. He sees Him and Him alone and feels that none is like Him in this universe. In Qur'an the meaning of *Tauhid* has been accepted only in these terms. It is said that it was to isolate the Eternal from the temporal. And when Ansari was asked the same question he answered that there were five sciences of realities : the science of illusion, of reality, of love, of knowledge and of *Tauhid*. This last science according to him was God and nothing but God, and the rest was (meaningless) non-sense. Other than He there was nothing and nobody.

Shah Husain expresses very clearly that *Tauhid* is to make the heart one, that is, to purify it and disengage it from attachment to anything other than God, both in terms of aspirations and desires. He fixes his consciousness and other faculties upon none but God.

Shah Husain knows One and sees none other than He. When a Sufi understands *Tauhid*, no desire remains in him either for the things of this world or for the next world. The heart which attains *Tauhid* is in fact the sanctuary of Allah (God). Shah Husain is of the opinion that one can enter that sanctuary except He. Sufis have their personal experience regarding this knowledge. There is a large number of Sufi orders but none can afford to disbelieve in this.

Shah Husain dedicates himself to God and believes that none is like Him and whose attributes are innumerable.

Sometimes even *Ibadat* (prayer) is considered *Tauhid*, because it is only God who is adored and worshipped by a Sufi. In the Qur'an *Tauhid* and *Ibadat* (worship) are almost synonymous.

Shah Husain says that when one feels the presence of God in oneself, one loses the worldliness in him and those who present themselves before Allah (who is all-powerful) they feel to be spiritually unparalleled. He says :

Jai ghat aē vasiā merā piārā

Othe dūjā nāhin samanvādā.

(In the heart where my Beloved resides, none other can reside.)

or

Sab jag dhund baulterā mannī

Tud bin hor nā bhānvādā.

(Though I have searched whole world, none pleases me but my Groom.)

A true Sufi, Shah Husain believes in God Almighty. He is unable to see any other power or force like Him. According to him man is weak and full of vices and thus remains at a far off distance from God.

Shah Husain knows that God has limitless attributes. According to him. God the King, is Great, Intelligent and Gracious. He says that one should live as He wills :

*Eh arj Husain sināwē
Terā keetā main man bhāwē
Dukh dard kish nair nā āwē
Hardam shukar guzārī dā.*

(Proclaims Husain faqir; Do whatever you please to your slave Husain; Ever pleased is he with you, no pain or sorrow he feels, and ever does pray in thanks.)

Shah Husain believes that Allah is incomparable. A Sufi always tries to conceive Him in his innerself. Remembrance of Allah is his life's wealth and he is able to tackle worldly problems while treading on this path. For Shah Husain, it is impossible to forget Allah, the Almighty :

*Ni taimi Rabb nā bhulī
Duae faqīrān dī elā.
Rabb nā bhulī hor sab bhulī
Rabb nā bhullan jehā.*

(You may forget Him not, This be the prayer of the lovely Faqir. Forget everything but not your Lord.)

Shah Husain is of the view that God is one but His presence can be felt in all. He dwells in everything of the world and is a master with number of colours. He feels that those who have the power to recognise *Rabb*, are the real designers of this world. They know that He is beyond barriers of time and space. He is the only truth which was in the past, is in the present and will be in future also. Everything is perishable in the world except God.

According to Shah Husain God is visible as well as invisible. He considers Him to be in his innerself and none else. He says :

*Sajnā bolan dī jae mālūn
Andar bāhar ikā sain
Kis nū ankh sunāin*

(Inside all you, outside are also you, to whom shall I thus narrate my plight?)

In his *kafis*, it is said that only those who have known God are worth this world. He believes that everything that has taken birth in this world is bound to perish one day. He propagates that self-realisation is very important because when one understands this principle, one is able to achieve dispassion. He knows that unless man detaches himself from all worldly attachments and allurements, he cannot achieve his goal—to be one with Almighty. Self-realisation is attained through purification of innerself. For this, man needs Allah's grace. That is why man concentrates all his energies on God. He has to put faith in the Almighty. From this step Shah Husain starts his spiritual journey to the house of Allah. *Tauhid* is thus an important and central theme in his poetry.

Ibn-ul-Arabi, (1165 A.D.-1240 A.D.) a great Sufi philosopher of Spain introduced the concept of *Wahdat-ul-Wujud* in Sufi philosophy. The Qur'an and the Hadith form the chief basis upon which Arabi builds his doctrine. This aspect of Sufi philosophy is very clear in Shah Husain's poetry. According to him, God is the essence of all existence and man needs Him for his existence. In other words, God needs man so that He may manifest Himself to Himself. Sometimes it is said that He is the only Truth/Reality. Other things may be there in existence but their existence is meaningless. Shah Husain believes that there is one reality—that is God or Allah. In the whole universe, He manifests Himself. God is the source of all and everybody turns to Him only in the end.

In Qur'an, Allah has been described in different ways and no Muslim can afford to disbelieve that. Shah Husain describes Him in his spiritual yearning. His God manifests Himself in an infinity of forms. Mysticism of Shah Husain accepts God in its endlessness. Since the world and everything in it are God's manifested attributes, their existence is relative. God is Absolute.

In the Qur'an, the word Allah has been repeated 2697

times. Shah Husain considers Him to be One, primeval, first, last, the end and limit of all things, incomparable, unchangeable, indivisible and immaterial, not subject to the laws of time, place or direction, possessing the attributes of holiness and exempt from all opposite qualities. He tries to impart this knowledge to the followers of Islam through his *kafis* and oral teachings.

In Panjabi Sufi poetry, this principle has been expressed by almost all the Sufi poets. Shah Husain says that God is everywhere and pervades everything :

*Andar tun hain, bāhar tū hian
Rom rom vich tun.*

(Inside is He, and outside also He, in every hair of mine.)

Shah Husain maintains that lucky are the men who enjoy His grace. God controls the whole universe and is all-powerful. He has his ministers in the form of angels who carry out His orders and help in administration. Shah Husain feels the presence of the Almighty in him and does not allow other things except Allah to enter his soul.

Shah Husain does not give importance to man's physical entity in his *Kafis*. He feels that his Allah is everything for him. He knows that Sufis are the children of Allah, and Allah showers His grace only on His selected men. Such selected people have the power of self-purification.

Shah Husain makes man conscious of the fact that God is the only power to whom he should pay his obeisance. There is none like Him who can influence and change the course of man's life. He feels sorry and pained because man is ignorant in recognising the Almighty who is the creator and controller of the whole universe. One can know the truth only when one is able to kindle divine light in oneself. He feels that only God will help man when his end comes.

Allah is the source of an infinite and illimitable light, a limitless ocean, compared with which the entire universe is more insignificant than a drop of water in the sea. There is not a single atom of existent beings which God does not

pervade, comprise and comprehend. And when we deal with the principle of Wahdat-ul-Wujud, it means that Allah is the First, Last, Visible and Invisible. This concept has been taken from the holy Qur'an. He considered it a very important principle. His God not only gives life to a person but can take life back according to His will. He is confident that those are spiritually great who have faith in Him and who live in the world as per His will.

Insan-ul-Kamil is another principle which gets prominence in Shah Husain's *Kafis*. *Insan-ul-Kamil*, *Haqiqat-ul-Muhammadiyah*, *Nur-ul-Muhammadiyah*, or *Kutab* refer to a spiritually great person or an elderly man. This refers to a person who has attained a very high spiritual level. A Sufi is known as a mystic in the West. He is a person who is considered to be bestowed with spiritual virtues. According to Shah Husain, a Sufi is a person who has surrendered everything to the Almighty, who has concentrated all his energies and faculties on God alone, who has revolutionised his inner-self. He establishes himself to be a new and spiritually great person. Shah Husain advises man to detach himself from the worldly things. In other words every thing is detached from his self except Allah. Even an idea or a thought of worldly things is a great sin for Shah Husain. He is always in search of his lost home from where he had come. For Shah Husain there are a number of spiritual hurdles and hardships in the attainment of the status of *Insan-ul-Kamil* or a Perfect Man. The journey to his original home is not an ordinary journey. It is a great spiritual flight, a tough spiritual journey from outer world to his inner world. It bases itself on self-purification. When he understands this problem, he will be able to understand the nature of this concept—*Insan-ul-Kamil* and after passing through ups and downs of this material world he shall be an illumined and spiritually awakened person. It will be easy for him to achieve *fana* and *baqa* (merging in God), the last stage of spiritual development. The whole of Panjabi Sufi

poetry refers to the attainment of this spiritual position. Shah Husain deals with such a problem and has full faith in the Almighty Allah. He says :

*Kahe Husain faqir nimānā
Tud bajon Koī hor nā jānan
Khāq pairān dī main rolī āhī nī.*

(Poor Husain faqir says that thyself donot know any other except Him. I have collected the dust, the dancing dust of the feet of the Lord, the Groom.)

A Sufi is a person who has attained the highest spiritual knowledge about God. That is why he can feel the presence of Allah in Him. Shah Husain knows that God is present near the man, but the man is always far from Him, because he is not aware of His proximity. The light of God is the only thing that can reveal this proximity, to a Sufi *salik* (seeker). Shah Husain feels that his whole self has been illumined with the light of Allah :

*Solutī sūrat dilbar wālī
Rahī akhūn vich mal
Ik pal sajjan judā nā theeve
Baithā andar mal.*

(The charming, vision melts in my eyes and he is ever present in inner domains, and never away from me.)

Shah Husain tells us the way to achieve the Master and to be with Him for ever. He sorts out this problem when he says :

*Kahe Husain sahelō
Sanh kit bidh parāī
Kar Sahib dī bandgī
Rahī jāgrat rahiaī.*

In the first two lines the poet puts this question to his maids "How could I please the groom." And in the next two lines he gets back an answer "Keep wake and meditate."

Realisation of the self is the basis of realisation of God or to achieve union with Him. Shah Husain is of the opinion that self-knowledge is very important and effective for a Sufi *salik* to achieve self-realisation and *Insan-ul-Kamil* is a

person who has achieved all this. He says :

*Bande aap nū pachāñ
Je tain aapnā aap pachāñā
Sain dā millan asāñ.*

(O man do know thyself. If you know thyself, then it is easy to meet the Groom.)

To realize the qualities of *Insan-ul-Kamil*, a Sufi battles his innerself. He toils hard in his *suluk* (spiritual journey). In Shah Husain's philosophy, this word refers to a Sufi who has attained external as well as internal purification and has built his spiritual strength beyond limits. He is such a person who has submitted his everything before his Master and is considered to be One with Him.

In Shah Husain's poetry, *Murshid* (spiritual preceptor) is considered to be very important. He plays a very important role between God and man. He is considered an *Insan-ul-Kamil* who helps in the fulfilment of spiritual demands of his *murid* (disciple). He is called Guru, *pir* and Sheikh also. Sometimes the *murid* has blind faith in his *murshid*. It is said that without faith in *kamil murshid* (perfect teacher), one cannot achieve spiritual heights. It is he who teaches him all about God, about him and about this world. According to Shah Husain, he knows the secrets of Almighty and inculcates in man those qualities which help him to be nearer Lord. He considers it man's duty to carry out the teachings of his *murshid*. He knows that *Kamil murshid* is a fully awakened personality and is a disciplined soldier of Allah. Shah Husain makes it very clear in his poetry that only the fellowship of *murshid* can help a *murid* reach his ultimate goal. Submission, earnestness and discipline, help the *murid* to be worthy of such fellowship. It is only the *murshid* who helps his *murid* in leading a high ethical or moral life. He feels in himself the power of eliminating *nafs* (desires). According to him, it is only the *murshid* who can teach his *murid* the meaning of repentance, abstinence, renunciation, poverty, patience, trust in Allah, and satisfac-

tion. These help in inculcating moral qualities in the Sufi *salik* on his way to the kingdom of Almighty. *Kafis* of Shah Husain tell us that Murshid is the proper guide on the path of the spiritual development of his murid.

For Shah Husain, murshid is his friend, advocate and lover and he feels that a Sufi *salik* faces a number of hardships on his way to Allah but his guide/murshid helps him in tackling such spiritual problems. He feels :

Rāt andhēri badal kaniān
Bājh Vakīlān mushkal baniān
Dadhe Kitā sad ve area.

(Pitch dark and cloudy as the night and showers are everywhere; so hard to venture out, and that without a guide; but the care free Lover has called, how could I say, let go?)

The murshid quenches the thirst of murid's innerself. He has the capacity and power to shape his *murid* into a perfect man. The *murid* submits his everything before his murshid when he says :

Asan andar bāhar lāl haī
Asan murshid nāl pyār haī
Asan eho vanaj vapār haī
Asan jiwandian marjāvā.

(That red within and red without are those who love the Murshid, and come together so oft, in ecstasy of the Dance.)

Ishq-i-Haqiqi (Love of God) is another important tenet of Shah Husain's writings. It was Rabe'a-al-Adawiya of Basra (d. 801 A.D.) who introduced this concept in Islam and later on this concept received an unparalleled importance in Sufism and it was accepted as the basis of Islamic mysticism. Dhu'n-Nun of Egypt (d. 859 A.D.) and Al-Junayd (d. 910 A.D.) of Baghdad contributed a lot in propagating it in the Islamic world.

For Shah Husain, this principle is not an ordinary one. He believes in disinterested love. He neither wants the benefits of this world nor does he love the Almighty for the achievement of Heaven. He loves Him for the sake of His love. Rabe'a was such a lover of God that her biographers

narrated a number of incidents and tales regarding her concept of *Ishq*. When she prayed she always uttered :

O God, if I worship Thee for fear of Hell, burn me in Hell,
and if I worship Thee in hope of Paradise, exclude me from
Paradise; but if I worship Thee for Thy own sake, grudge me
not Thy everlasting beauty.

In fact, Shah Husain's poetry is an aspiration of the soul towards God in which a Sufi *salik* does not want anything except His *Ishq*. He feels that Love is the divine instinct in man, impelling his soul or innerself to realise its nature and destiny. According to him, no religion is more sublime than the religion of love and longing for God. He knows that his *Ishq* for Almighty is the basis of moral perfection and spiritual knowledge. It is self-renunciation and self-sacrifice. He feels to be dispossessed of all possessions. Wealth, honour, life, etc. will have no value for him. Islam itself is a religion of Love, and Prophet Muhammad is God's *Habib* (friend). Shah Husain considers Allah as his highest object. Man loves God because He is beautiful, lovable and wonderful. In fact, God's beauty is present in everything of this universe. Beauty and *Ishq* are the origins of every creation. That is why Shah Husain submits all his energies before Allah and Allah's love expels all worldly desires from his *qalb* (heart).

In *Ishq-i-Haqiqi*, a Sufi is able to enjoy His grace and bliss. *Ishq* of Allah helps him to achieve spiritual and emotional satisfaction. Intellect is unable to enjoy the divine sweetness. Margaret Smith is of the view that mystics have been lovers of God because it is only through this medium that a person draws himself nearer Him. Love, which is supreme for Shah Husain is the essence of all religions.

For him the concept of *Ishq* is elimination of all except Allah. In other words money, lust, respect and pride and even his whole self is considered to be nothing before Almighty. In this way a Sufi keeps his *qalb* clean and pure and starts loving Allah in full submission.

In Sufism, the goal of a Sufi is to unite with God and when he purifies his heart and feels only the rule of love, he establishes himself to be a perfect man. Shah Husain's main object is Allah and his continuous contemplation on God draws him nearer Him. Khaliq Ahmad Nizami says that two bed-rocks on which the entire structure of mystic ideology in Islam rests are—'love of God' and 'personal contact with Him'. The Qur'an lays stress that man should love God. When Shah Husain feels the presence of God's love in him, he is enlightened with God's knowledge. J.S. Grewal refers to the book entitled *Furwaid-al-Fuwad* and affirms that 'a single particle of love' is better than all the devotion of men and angels put together. Shah Husain is of the view that when a person is bestowed with Almighty's grace he is dispossessed of all things except God.

Shah Husain's *kafis* refer to the emotional touch of God's love. He is quite aware that it is very difficult to establish such relations with Almighty because one ceases his love with other worldly relations or things. A Sufi cannot establish his *Ishq* at two levels simultaneously. In fact he is a lover of God. Shah Husain does not want to leave His benevolence when he says :

Sajjan de hath bāhm asādi
Kion kar ankhān chad ve area

...
Ishq muhabat seī jānan
Pai jinahān de had ve area

In the first two lines he says that he is in the grip of the Lover, who holds him by the wrist and how could he ask him to look it. And in the next two lines he says that only those know of love who feel it in their bones.

When a man loves God, he is able to detach himself from worldly love or *Ishq-i-majazi*. This attraction of love is both ways—in a Sufi as well as in God. When Shah Husain enjoys the sweetness of His love, his God is also attracted towards him. God dwells in his heart from the very beginning. He says :

*Meri te māhī dī preet charokī
Jan sir āhe nā chatē.*

(Me and my Lord are in love since long, even when my hair
had not grown.)

He knows that somebody who has illumined his inner world with the light of His love, is not a worldly man. He shuts his eyes to worldly lusts and concentrates on Almighty alone. He says :

*Lagā ishq chukī maslāhat
Bisrian panje sate.*

(When I fell in Love, forgot all Lore, forsook the five, the seven.)

Shah Husain knows that when a feeling of separation arises in oneself, one cannot live a life of satisfaction. He always focuses on his object. It also becomes difficult for a man to live in such circumstances for long. In one of his *kafis* he says :

*Dil vich chining uthī Heere dī
Rānjhan takhat Hazāreon dhāyā hī
Kahe Husain faqir nīmānā
Maule dost milāyā hī*

(When the spark of love doth twinkle in the heart of Heer Sayal, Ranjah rushed from Takhat Hazara. Poor faqir Husain says that God brings together true lovers.)

For Shah Husain, separation of God is pinching and gives mental torture to him. He says :

*Dard vichore dā hāl,
Nī main kenu aaklān.
Sūlān mār divānī kī
Birhon pia sāde khlāl
Nī main kenu aaklān.*

(To whom I should narrate the condition of my pain and separation. Thorns of love have pierced the heart and made me mad and I am suffering from separation. To whom should I complain.)

Shah Husain knows that when a person purifies his heart and *ruh* (spirit), his God starts living in him, and when

he feels the presence of Almighty in him, he is not an ordinary fellow. He is purified and his innerself is illumined with Godly light. He comes close to Almighty and also feels nearness to his God. His longing for the achievement of God's love reaches the final stage. His Master helps him to be free from wandering of the material world. He starts feeling his God to be with him. Shah Husain says :

*Sohni sūrat dīlbar wālī
Rahī akhīn vich gal,
Ik pal sajjan Judā nā theevē.
Baithā andar mal.*

(The charming vision melts in eyes and my friend is ever present in inner domains and never aloof from me.)

R.A. Nicholson considers God's love to be the prime principle in Sufi morality. The whole structure of Islamic mysticism rests on Ishq-i-Haqiqi, and it is considered as such in Shah Husain's poetry. It is a great and important weapon for him on the spiritual journey. With the help of this weapon, he is able to defeat other worldly forces which hinder his spiritual progress. Love of the worldly things becomes ineffective and he overcomes such problems with great spiritual power which he attains through God's love. In this way the feeling of separation comes to an end and of oneness takes birth in him.

In the poetry of Shah Husain, love of God is depicted in emotional and fervent nature. Sometimes when he is unable to bear the pangs of separation, he breaks all the barriers of discipline. Every Sufi poet has depicted love according to his feelings and emotions. That is why love of God has been described in Panjabi Sufi poetry as emotional and fervent.

Description of God's love is impossible in words. It is basically concerned with man's emotions and feelings. Shah Husain took the help of lovers of Panjabi love-tales in describing the relation of man and God. In fact, he used such symbols just to make clear the relation between God

and man and these symbols were very appropriate. In these love-tales, the lovers have one aim. They go ahead to meet each other despite a number of hardships. They feel that their relationship has been decided in heaven. They continue their struggle despite opposition from all directions. Spiritually they feel to be one, may be physically separate. They also feel pangs of separation. They hope to be one if not in this selfish world, may be in the next world, after death.

Shah Husain feels that he is to continue his journey to the house of Allah. Most of his life is passed in separation. Meeting the Almighty is short lived and rest is yearning of the soul to reach Him and be with Him permanently.

In Panjabi Sufi poetry the situation of separation of the soul from God is very clear. It discontinues only through God's love. Shah Husain feels that mental and spiritual satisfaction will be attained only when he gets near Him. To be one with Him or reaching Unitive State is the last stage of spiritual journey. This stage is called *fana* and it means annihilation of the self. Shah Husain's concept of passing away or *fana* of individual self in Universal Being has been depicted through his *Kafis*. According to him when a Sufi reaches this stage of spiritual development, his soul feels full satisfaction and spiritual peace. Shah Husain says :

*Tusī rai mil deho mumārkhān
Merā solmā sajjan ghar ālā hī.
Jis sajjan nū main dhudendī vatan
So sajjan main pāyā hī.*

(Come gather around me all join to give me blessings. My love has come to my house. I have found the friend whom I searched everywhere.)

This spiritual position is par excellence because in his pure heart resides Allah. Here he feels oneness with his Lord. Shah Husain says :

*Māhī Māhī kookdi
Main āppe Rānjhan hoī
Rānjhan Rānjhan mainu sab koī nakho
Heer nū nakho koī.*

(Let me be called, by each, by the name of Ranjah dear, and none address me as Heer. I have become the Ranjah by calling so oft on Him.)

This final stage of spiritual development of a Sufi is achieved after a long, hard and tough journey. It is achieved after a continuous battle of his innerself with his outerself. It is a journey from outside to his inner world. This target is the main aim of Shah Husain and he considers it to be the end of his spiritual journey.

There are certain words which have been used in Sufi philosophy and have definite and specific place in sufism—*nafs*, *qalb*, *sirr* and *ruh*. These words imply a definite meaning and to go into their nature, would be quite interesting.

As far the concept of *nafs* in Shah Husain's poetry is concerned, he is of the view that *nafs* is the seat of passion and lust. In other words it is an evil self and nearer the flesh. He tries to mortify it through different means because *nafs* is considered as a big hurdle in the spiritual development. Sufis have equated *nafs* with a dog, a snake and a mouse. To overcome the *nafs*, he feels, is a moral transmutation.

As far as the *Kafis* of Shah Husain are concerned, world '*nafs*' has not been used as such but the thoughts and emotions which are expressed, denote the same meaning. It is concerned mainly with animal nature of man. It is nearer the nature of Iblis (Satan). Sufi philosophers believe that purification of *nafs* is possible. For this Shah Husain lays stress on achieving moral goodness. He compares *nafs* with five senses of man and wants that one should be brave enough to control them. He says :

Panje sakhian iko jehān
Hukm sanjog ikathān hoian
Jo panjān nū dhāgā pae
So sabrai kant rejhāe.

(Five maids have gathered together of equal age, each eager for union with Groom, who puts the thread through all these five, is sure to please the Groom.)

Shah Husain wants that a person should not be slave

of his demands of lusts. He wants to keep them at a certain distance. He knows that material demands of man keep the spirit unclean. Ego and pride keep the *salik* away from his master or from the ultimate target. Shah Husain says :

*Soinā rupā te māl khazīnā
Hoe rahia mehmān.
Kahe Husain faqīr nīmānā
Chad de khudī te gumān.*

(These treasures of thine are guests who ever are on the move; Then why this pride for these.)

Shah Husain knows that unless man is free from his *nafs*, he is unable to move towards his goal. In Sufi poetry it has been repeatedly expressed that a man is to die one day. He will have to show his worth after death. For that he must prepare himself so that he is accepted in the domain of the Almighty and does not face the fire of hell.

He is of the opinion that a man who defeats his *nafs* through purification, is not an ordinary person. He will be able to perform his spiritual journey easily and without any hindrance.

Qalb (heart) is another word with specific meaning and nature in sufism. Shah Husain used this word not as it is used in medical world which refers to the physical phenomena. For him, it has some different connotation. It is a mirror that reflects the reality of God. He believes that he can come into contact with his Lord through this faculty. It helps him to concentrate all his energies on his spiritual faculties. He is of the opinion that the heart is capable of knowing the essences of all things and when illumined by faith and knowledge, reflects the whole God. They try to keep it quite clean. For them it is the source of all powers. But if it is covered with ugliness of the world, it loses its beauty and power. So cleansing of the *qalb* (heart) is a must so that a Sufi may be able to erase from it all the attachment and lust of the world. The heart of a Sufi has a spiritual substance. It is punished if it goes directionless. Shah Husain

believes that the heart must not fall prey to the love of the world, rather it should be detached. It is renunciation and is of great importance. Worldly comforts and material possessions are hinderance in spiritual journey. It should not be misunderstood that one must leave society and go into seclusion. Rather one should apply one's physical and mental faculties to the furtherance of spirituality. There are certain limits which a man should not violate so that his heart is not affected. According to Shah Husain continuous *dhikr* (constant remembrance of God) keeps man's heart clean as the heart of a Sufi overflows with the love of his Master. His object of love is none other than God. So Shah Husain has given utmost importance to *qalb* in spiritualism.

He feels that when the love of the Almighty takes its place in his heart, love of the world vanishes. He considers that his Lord is within him. A Sufi *salik* is very eager to have His glimpse so that his whole self is illumined with His light. Shah Husain knows that those who are close to God in their hearts of heart, they are free from worldly sorrows and pains. They take happiness and sorrow as God's will.

He believes that only through purification of the heart, a Sufi can reach the Ultimate Reality. Such persons who submit before Him, are faqirs or *darvishes* in the real sense. Detachment from all worldly things means purification of the heart. Al-Hasan of Basra considers this world to be like a dream and a passing shadow, and an intelligent and spiritually high person is not deceived by it. Shah Husain's heart does not accept any worldly allurements. Only the Almighty rules his heart. His innerself is enlightened with unbearable light of God and he enjoys this bliss continuously.

Another word is *Sirr* which has not been discussed in Panjabi Sufi poetry as it is. *Sirr* refers to the emptying of one's self of all thoughts that divert the mind from God-thoughts of all except God. *Sirr* should be well guarded so that unwanted and unnecessary things do not enter into it.

According to Shah Husain *Sirr* is considered to be an organ of mystical vision. He feels that this word applies to everything which passes between the finite and the infinite, the *ahid* and the *Rabb* (servant and the master). Whatever it may be, for him the emptying of it is a must. This state of the self is achieved through contemplation. God is considered to be closer to him even than his jugular vein.

Shah Husain believes that when a Sufi defeats the external senses which invade his innerself, his internal senses are awakened. When he contemplates, he guards his heart. He concentrates his different faculties and energies on God alone.

Though the word '*sirr*' does not appear as such in Shah Husain's *kafis*, the motive and thought behind it definitely has been expressed in his writings. Shah Husain feels that a person attains the state of awakening of his innerself when he feels the presence of God in him. When God occupies his inner world, he is considered to be great and his worldly life becomes meaningless. He feels that he has wasted his time in ignorance. One can feel God's presence only when one has purified one's innerself. According to Shah Husain :

*Suti rahī kulakmī
Jāgi vadbhāgī.
Jagan kī bidh so lahe
Jis anter lāgī.*

(My illuck kept me sleeping throughout the night, and I have opened eyes at dawn.)

Shah Husain wants that a person should keep the negative forces away from his inner regime. *Sirr* must be guarded from them because those forces may not make it dirty or unclean. *Sirr* is concerned with man's innerself. It is the duty of a Sufi to keep the *Sirr* uninfluenced by evil things. He says :

*Kahe Husain faqīr nimānā
Dunyā chod ākhar mar jānā
Kadī tan andar jhātī pao nī*

(Husain faqir says that remember death. Do cast a glance in your innerself.)

So it is clear that the concept of *Sirr* is very much there in the *kafis* of Husain. Though he has not used this word but its meaning and nature is quite visible in his poetry. In fact this word *sirr* has not been used by any Panjabi Sufi poet. But it does not mean that the meaning behind it is absent. In fact it is connected with morality of a Sufi. So Shah Husain has used this in the sense it is worth mentioning.

Ruh is another word of great significance in spiritual realm. In Sufi terminology the term *tajliya-i-Ruh* or the illumination of the Spirit implies the filling of the human spirit with the fervour of His love. Sufi calls the spirit the 'Ruh'. Shah Husain believes that man's heart is spiritual in substance. Sometimes it is difficult to differentiate between heart and *ruh*. It is considered that the *ruh* which is illuminated with God's attributes is His ambassador on this earth. It must be illumined with divine aids. Shah Husain feels that *Ruh* must be free of lust and passion, and must enjoy divine love which is pure and clean. When the *ruh* of a Sufi receives God's love it enjoys the ecstasy of being near to Ultimate Reality. He very easily moves towards God's kingdom. He knows that he has received divine grace and due to that his *ruh*, stripped off all relations, has become very humble. At this stage the *ruh* attains Reality. A Sufi beholds God with his inward eye, uninfluenced by any aspect of the phenomenal world. Shah Husain considers that by keeping the *Ruh* clean, one continues one's spiritual journey upward—towards the house of Lord. He is such a traveller as has thrown from his self the perishable essence of the world. His *ruh* overflows with the love of God and His innumerable attributes. When this feeling comes in him, he attains a very high spiritual position. He becomes an illumined and enlightened man enjoying number of divine qualities.

Though some of these concepts do not occur as such

in Shah Husain's *kafis*, the spirit of these words is very much there. In fact, one single principle of Sufi philosophy is insufficient but when we look at Sufi philosophy in totality, it becomes an important aspect. They not only describe the nature of God and man only, but also help a man to start his journey on a definite spiritual path. According to Shah Husain when a Sufi understands the nature and meaning of such concepts, he is established as a man par excellence. Following a definite divine path, he continues his spiritual journey and in the end becomes one with Ultimate Reality or reaches the stage of *Fana* and *baqa*. This is his ultimate aim and purpose of his life.

Poetic Art of Shah Husain

Shah Husain's main contribution to Panjabi literature is in the form of Kafis. Kafi has been accepted as a form of poetry. From Shah Husain (1538 A.D.-1599 A.D.) to Ghulam Farid (1854 A.D.-1901 A.D.) every Panjabi Sufi poet expressed his mystical yearnings in this poetic form. This poetic form was established as an important medium of one's expression during the medieval period.

'Kafi' is of Arabic origin. It is a poetic stanza of two lines and more lines are added to it when it is sung. It is not a specific metre, it is a way of singing specific poetic lines. Kafis is essentially a lyric which is meant to be sung. Sufi faqirs and seers used to sing devotional songs and their followers would repeat the lines of the song after them. Such devotional hymns came to be called kafis. Before Shah Husain, this form of poetry was also adopted by Sikh Gurus for their mystical expression and is included in the Holy Granth. But among the Panjabi Sufi poets, Shah Husain was the first, who expressed his Sufi thoughts in this particular poetic form.

Panjabi Sufi poets adopted Kafi to express their mystical feelings and it became a very popular medium of expression among them. Panjabi folk had great love for it. Kafi is a form of couplet, brief in size but a powerful form of expression of divine love. It deals with one subject and that too an important one. It is also considered to be related to *Raga*, and music is its important aspect.

Sometimes a Sufi poet wrote a couplet of two lines in which he expressed his main theme or idea and that couplet was often used during the whole mystical song. Repetition of such lines in the Kafi made the poetry more rhythmical and musical and had a particular mystical effect on the listeners. In Kafi, Panjabi Sufi poets depicted their love of God, pain and feeling of separation from Him, and such a painful condition of a Sufi *salik* is expressed in such lyrics very effectively.

Shah Husain's Kafis are in different ragas i. e., Sri Raga, Majh, Asa, Devgandhari, Bilawal, Ram Kali, Tukhari, Kidara, Bhairwi, Tilang, Basant, Sarang, Kanra, etc. This shows that the kafis of Shah Husain can be sung as these are full of rhythm and music. Dr. Mohan Singh says that the religious love songs found their sweetest singer in Shah Husain.

Shah Husain does not follow any fixed principles of writing Kafi, rather he takes liberty in composing it. It is true that he keeps the poetic form in mind while laying more stress on thought content. His Kafis are mostly short in size but when he tries to give advice to a Sufi *salik* or when the theme of some of his Kafis needs elaboration, he takes liberty. The kafis, which are of limited lines, are full of deep and profound spiritual ideas. The concept of Wahadat-ul-Wjud is described in a few words, Such as :

Rabbā mere hāl dā mehram tūn. (pause)
Andar tūn hein bāhar tūn hein
Rom rom vich tūn.

(Inside is He, and outside also He, in every hair of mine; so intimate is He, with this condition fine.)

Shah Husain is quite successful in bringing to us this aspect of sufism in a convincing way.

It is said that Shah Husain had gained a lot of knowledge and experience of life when he started writing kafi. He was fully conversant with the problems of spiritual development of a Sufi *salik*. It is also considered that most of these kafis might have been written between (1570-1575 A.D.)

during his middle age. God is the central theme of his kafis and has been discussed in almost each of his kafis. God's love or Ishq-i-Haqiqi has been described comprehensively. Beauty and charm, wealth and luxurious living or pleasures are short-lived and they keep a man away from his goal.

Shah Husain's poetic distinctiveness lies in his capacity to mould his thoughts and feelings. He is also fully conscious of the treatment of music and rhythm in the kafis. This also has a definite effect on the spirit of a Sufi traveller.

*Nĩ sayeo asin nainā de ākhe lage
Jinahan pāk nigāhān hoian
se kahū nā jānde thage.*

(O maiden friends, do come and know of all, No deception is there for those, who have the purified eyes.)

The short kafis of Shah Husain, are of five lines; the longest, is of thirty-five lines. This shows that Shah Husain is not bound by specific number of lines for a kafi. He takes liberty in composition of lines. Being a lyric, kafi is independent of such a limit.

Another characteristic of Shah Husain's kafis is the use of tipping of one or two lines. For example :

*Sain Jinandrevāl tinā nu gami kaindave lokā. (pause)
(They have no worry at all, who find Him on their side.)*

This couplet is in the beginning as well as in the end of the kafi. These tipping lines in fact depict the main thought of the writer. With this the poet not only lays stress on emotions but is also able to give birth to musical flow. In other words, it can be said that the tipping lines/line become the basis of the theme of a particular kafi. But such usage is not adopted on a large scale. It is quite limited.

Another feature of kafis is its alliteration. Shah Husain is very particular while writing kafi. Sometimes rhyme is used after each line and sometimes after the end of second line. Shah Husain has taken liberty as far as the form is concerned but he is fully conscious about the musical and rhythmical aspect of the kafis. For example :

*Kiā keeto ethe aeke
Kiā karsein othe jaeke.*

(What did you do here on coming, what you will tell when
go thou there.)

It can be said that each kafi is not only complete in itself from the point of view of thought and content but also has an inner link with the other.

Another feature of his kafis is its symbolism. In fact, symbols play an important role in mystic poetry. Symbols are used in metaphysical and mystical poetry when language prove inadequate. Charles Chadwick is of the opinion that symbolism can be defined as the art of expressing ideas and emotions neither by describing them directly nor by defining them through overt comparisons with concrete images, but by suggesting what these ideas, emotions are, by creating them in the mind of the reader through the use of unexplained symbols.

Symbols, not only help the writer to convey the feelings but also make the theme of the poetry simple, clear and easy to understand. This is how Shah Husain establishes his conscious relations with the Almighty. The use of symbols by him has contributed a lot to make Panjabi Sufi poetry artistic and rich. He used such symbols as were easily available in village life and in Panjabi folk culture and with whom people were quite familiar. Most of the symbols were agriculture-based. Some symbols used by Shah Husain are concerned with the spiritual journey of the Sufi, some with relationship of love between God and man and some symbols are related to moral life of a person. Panjabi Sufi poets used the symbol of 'jōūrney' with local colour. Shah Husain needs God's grace to pass through the arduous spiritual journey. He says :

*Nain bhī dūnghī tulā purānā.
Maulā pār langhāwē.*

(The stream is deep, the raft so old, God will help thou to pass through.)

Shah Husain is of the view that while treading on the path to God's Kingdom, man carries a heavy load of worldly love, passion and lust and that causes pain to the spirit of man. He considers spiritual achievement to be very tough and hard. He says :

*Aukhī Ghātī bikhrā paindā,
Rah faqīran dā lama.
Sāri Umar langaia evein
Kar kar kūrē kaman.*

(So hard is the path of mystics, which you do spend whole life, in these affairs in vain.)

The spirit of man is symbolised as 'traveller' and the world as a 'rest-house' or 'inn'. On the way to God's house, there is a lot of mud of lust and passion and to complete the spiritual journey, a Sufi needs the help of a 'murshid' or 'pir' or 'guide'. His murshid takes him to the house of Absolute from mundane life safely. He says :

*Agge nain dunghī main kit gun langsan pār,
Rāt andherī pandh durādā, sāthī nahion nāl.*

(In the gaws of rivers fives are you; no help is there for thee. Night is dark, journey is long, thou is friendless.)

Friend of the Sufi is his *murshid* and the *murshid* has the power to purify and illuminate the inner world of his disciple. Nearness of the Almighty is possible only through the efforts of the *murshid*. He is the one who is perfect and takes his *murid* with him to the Absolute. Shah Husain says :

*Kahe Husain faqīr nimānā
Murshid dost milāyā hī.*

(My Murshid has it so joined, this friend of mine with me, So sayeth Husain faqīr.)

Murshid is considered a goldsmith who can mould his *murid* any way he likes. He changes his whole personality—inner and outer—with his divine power. In Sufi philosophy the *murid* follows the guidance and teachings of the *murshid* blindly. *Murshid* gets respect and love from his *murid* and

is revered throughout his life.

Shah Husain has employed different symbols in regard to spiritual development i.e., for the world, man, human body and *murshid*. Mundane life, river, foreign country, inn (world), traveller (man), boat (body), boatman (murshid), weight, dirt (lust and passion), bank (the other side of the river). Some symbols have been taken from nature which make the spiritual journey more rough and dreadful i.e. forests, rain, clouds, drizzle, lightning, dust-storm, dark night, snakes, lions. This does not dishearten or discourage the traveller rather he continues his journey to the house of Lord uninterrupted. The symbols used are from rural life and are quite close to the village folk.

Panjabi Sufi poetry is symbolic of restlessness and impatience of the soul and its yearning to achieve oneness with the Absolute. It is not an ordinary mental restlessness rather it is a violent flow of emotions in which Shah Husain carries on his spiritual journey.

Shah Husain has used 'man's love' as symbol to suggest relationship of God and man, a relationship which forms a very important aspect of Panjabi Sufi poetry. For him Ishq/love is the basis of the visible world. Ordinarily, Almighty is considered to be in human form and when a man imagines Him in this form, he starts considering Him as his friend. He gets mental satisfaction and peace of mind in this situation. For centuries, man has been establishing his relations with God as such.

Evelyn Underhill is very appropriate when she says that the imagery of human love and marriage should have seemed to the mystic the best of all images of his own fulfilment of life; his soul's surrender, first to the call, finally to the embrace of perfect love.

Shah Husain adopted Panjabi culture and Panjabi folk life as a medium to explain his love-relationship with the Almighty. Husband-wife relationship was best suited for explaining man's divine love.

Our marriage institution is based on husband-wife relationship. The concept of submission of all before the husband makes love more sublime and forceful. The Sufis have used the language of human love for depicting such a relationship very effectively and purposefully. It can be called 'Bride Mysticism' as is understood in western mysticism.

In Shah Husain's poetry, this world is regarded as 'Parental Home' and the next world (after death) as 'Inlaw's Home'. In Panjabi culture, a woman prepares dowry so that she may get respect and love in her inlaws house. It is a hard fact that one day she is to leave her parents to join her in-laws. Similarly the soul of man is to leave the visible world one day and reach the house of the Lord. Consequently, the soul must have such characteristics as are helpful in getting the love of the Absolute.

The symbols of marriage and other related rituals have been used by Shah Husain in his kafis. The life and enjoyment of parental house is short-lived for a woman. She is to get married one day and her second ceremonial visit (*muklawā*) to her inlaws must take place. Shah Husain says :

*Bālpan khed lai kuriye nī
Terā aj ke kal muklāwā.*

(O Girl, enjoy your childhood, you may go for second ceremonial visit to your inlaws today or tomorrow.)

It is said that all the souls are wives of the Absolute, and moral goodness—the ornament of spiritual marriage. In our social-cultural life, a woman does not get so much respect and freedom in her inlaw's house as she gets in her parent's house. To get respect, love and acceptance in her inlaw's house, she has to exhibit her moral virtues and goodness.

Shah Husain was the first Sufi to draw symbols from the love tales of Panjabi lovers and use them in Panjabi poetry. These love tales were very popular among the people of Panjab and the heroes and heroines of these tales had a

deep impact on the hearts of the Panjabis. In fact, these lovers transcended physical love. They had the spiritual attachment with each other but the medieval society denied them their fulfilment by raising religious, social, moral and ethical taboos against them. They continued their search for each other despite hardships. Their love was selfless and sincere. That is why Shah Husain has used such symbols to describe the spiritual state of a Sufi :

*Ni mae mainu kherian dī gal nā ākh
Rānjhan mendhā main Rānjhan dī
Kherian nu kūrī jhāk
Lok jāne Hīr kamli hoī, Hire dā var chāk
Kahe Husain faqīr saindā, jandā maulā āp.*

(Ranjah is mine and I am of Ranjah, false is the claim of kheras; Talk not to me, of kheras O mother. The ordinary folk take Heer, to be mad and senseless maiden, having taken the cowherd as a Groom; But the Lord alone doth know the truth and all the truth; so sayeth Husain faqir.)

Shah Husain uses the symbols or 'Hir' and 'Ranjha' as representatives of soul/spirit and God. 'Takhat Hazara' is the house of the lover. Khera became the symbol of this world. Shah Husain's symbolism is based entirely on Panjabi way of life and Panjabi culture. These love tales depict the deep emotional outburst of the soul yearning unity with God.

Shah Husain belonged to the family of weavers. He was fully conversant with all the tools and other material of his parental profession. That is why he has used a large number of symbols from that occupation. Old village culture or life of Panjab has been depicted in its numerous colours in Panjabi Sufi poetry, especially in Shah Husain's Kafis. Sitting together of a group of young spinning women, preparation of dowry, and preparation for inlaws house, are special features of Panjabi culture. Shah Husain has used a variety of symbols from his own profession and village life such as spinning wheel, stringed chair, cotton, carding of cotton, spindle, thread or, warp and weft, web, hank,

frame for making skein or hank, piece of carded cotton wool prepared for spinning, spout etc. A length of home-spun coarse cotton cloth, given as a part of dowry or as a present to guests or as offering to holy men, has a specific importance in Panjabi culture and Shah Husain has used it as a symbol of good omen. He has used spinning wheel as a symbol for human body.

Purification of self is very important for onward journey to the next world. In Panjabi Sufi poetry, special emphasis has been laid on this aspect of spiritual development. 'Nafs' which has been described as passion and lust in man's mundane life leads man away from the right path. Sufi saints tried to vanquish this vice so that man is free of such worldly instincts as make his spiritual path unclean and muddy. Shah Husain feels that by adopting goodness a sufi *salik* can achieve the final stage of spiritual development i.e., *fana* and *baqa*. According to him :

*Māhi māhi kūkdī
Main āpe Rānjhan hoī
Rānjhan Rānjhan mainu sab koī ākho
Hir nā Ākho koī.*

(Let me be called, by each, by the name of Ranjah, dear and none address me as Heer. I have become the Ranjah, by calling so oft on Him.)

In the Qur'an God has been described as 'punishment giver' or 'hard' or 'oppressive' for those who lose faith in Him and act according to Iblis. Shah Husain says :

*Dādhe de piāthre nī ac
An ke hatī oluā takre nī pae
Merā chārā kujh nā chālī*

(His message arrived, His couriers caught me fast, And helpless I be now.)

'Foot soldiers' is the symbol of angel of death, who has to take man with him one day. In fact, Shah Husain depends more on Panjabi culture or Panjabi village life for his poetic symbolism and less on Islamic traditions. The use of symbolism adds to the virtues of his poetic art and clarification

of his thought content.

The whole of Panjabi culture in totality breathes through his writings. Persian wheel, women folk drawing water from the village well and pouring into their earthen pots, wearing of red bangles by the newly married women and swinging by ropes on the trees give a panoramic view of village life.

Panjabi culture is basically rural-based. It has been exhibited in minute detail for the first time in Shah Husain's Sufi poetry. Ornaments have special attraction for young Panjabi women. They are part and parcel of their personality. Many rituals have been connected with them. The goldsmith is especially connected with this profession. He prepares a number of gold ornaments with lovely and attractive designs. Shah Husain has used the ornaments such as earrings, rings, bangles etc., for clarification and interpretation of his spiritual state. Such as :

*Je koī khabar mitrān dī liāwē
Main hath dē daindiān chhalē.*

(On him will I bestow this wedding ring of mine, who gives me news of Him.)

Shah Husain has laid stress on the need for man to become 'Perfect Man' or 'Insan-ul-Kamil'. Consequently, he wants him to wear the ornaments of morality and goodness. This moral aspect not only establishes a person in the society as a better citizen but also helps him to go ahead towards spiritual development. Meditation of God, faqiri, discontentment and detachment from worldly wealth, living according to God's will, purification of outer and inner life, knowledge of the self, self-abnegation, acquiring humility, foregoing ego and pride, seeing God in one's heart or *qalb*, stress on good actions, to be detached from or to leave villification, deceitfulness, backbiting and slander are some aspects of man's personality. Moral aspects are acquired by a Sufi, and those which take him on a wrong path are discarded by him. This enables him to achieve his goal.

Shah Husain has chosen a variety of symbols to express this aspect of morality. He tries to justify that a Sufi can successfully carry on his spiritual journey to God's house after acquiring such moral goodness and can establish himself as an Isnan-ul-Kamil. These virtues are useful not only spiritually but also for the establishment of a good society. Shah Husain says :

*Nindīā, dharoh, bakhīlī, chuglī
Nīt kardā phirdā thug haī
Kahe Husain seī jag āē
Jinah pachātā rabb haī.*

(What clever devices have cheats, backbitting, and slanderous talk. Those are the genuine souls, who knows the Lord the Groom; so sayeth Husain faqir.)

Recognition of God depends on one's detachment from immoral things. In other words recognition of the self is a must for the recognition of God. For every healthy society such moral values are a necessity.

Another aspect of his poetic art is that he has lived and enjoyed village life which is what his kafis depicting different shades of Panjabi folk culture suggest. The peacock and hen have a specific place in village life, and are considered very significant in Panjabi culture. For the cultural enjoyment, village folk had their main games such as playing with small ball (Kheinu), a kind of folk dance (Ludi), a circular folk dance (Jhumar), flying of kite, a game like blackgammon played with an oblong dice (Chaucer or Chaupar). *Sawan*, the month of rainy season, has its own charm in Panjab. The village belles swing on the ropes tied to the trees and sing emotional songs filled with love.

The hospitality is a unique virtue in Panjabi culture. It is a distinctive feature of Panjabi folk life. Panjabis have great respect for their near and dear ones who are given warm welcome on their arrival at their relative's house. They are served the best food especially by the in-laws of one's sons or daughters. Shah Husain says :

*Ayan kurman tun kutein malida
Faqrān nu tukar beha.*

(On father-in-law's visit, sweetmeat, made with crushed bread mixed with butter and sugar is offered, but stale loaf to the faqirs.)

In the kafis of Shah Husain different types of rituals of the contemporary Panjabi culture have been described. Such rituals as one finds mentioned in Shah Husain's kafis is a specific feature of the contemporary society. They refer to the marriage ceremonies performed during those days and in the marriage ceremony a 'mediator' or a go-between (Vichola) played an important role. The bride had no choice or say but to accept her parent's decision. After the arrival of the marriage party, and after its reception by girl's parents, the actual marriage ceremony was performed by a priest. Thereafter the marriage party was served food and a tearful send-off was given to the bride by her parents and relatives. She was made to sit in a wooden palanquin (doli) and leave for her inlaw's house. She was also given dowry by the parents at the time of her departure, a dowry which she had prepared herself and with which she had emotional attachment. It shows that the dowry system was prevalent in those days also.

Another aspect of his poetic distinctiveness is its near similarity with Sikh mysticism. In the medieval period, Sikh Guru's bani and Sufi literature were the two most important literary forms. Both of them were mystic in nature. Both laid stress on meditation of God though they had different cultural and religious backgrounds and traditions. Belief in One God, establishment of relationship of love with Him, contribution of Guru or murshid in achievement of Oneness with the Absolute, achievement of moral goodness etc. are common features in both of them. But both have different characteristics because of different traditions. Shah Husain was a contemporary of the fifth Sikh Guru, Guru Arjun Dev whose influence on him is clearly perceptible

concerning emotions, thoughts and vocabulary of the poet. Such an influence can be illustrated from the kafis of Shah Husain. The poet's emphasis on recitation of naam, meditation, love of God, a truthful God, and many common lines amply give the proof of influence of Gurubani on him. It has made the writings of Shah Husain more effective as far as the inner tune of spiritualism of Shah Husain is concerned.

The kafis of Shah Husain have their own beauty from the point of view of language. Though he belonged to the tradition which was non-Indian or non-Panjabi but having been born in the Panjab, the soil of this land reshaped his thoughts, ideas and emotions. It goes to his credit that Sufi thought and philosophy get successful and effective interpretation through his kafis in Panjabi language.

Though sufism influenced Panjabi way of life and thought on its arrival, it was also influenced by Indian philosophy and spiritual life of Panjab. Even then it can be said that the nature of sufism had its own identity.

Sufis were very close to folk life. They used to express their spiritual condition at an ordinary level. That was the reason that Panjabi Sufi poets were revered, especially Shah Husain as a great saint. The language of Shah Husain's kafis is the language of Amritsar and Lahore districts commonly known as Majhi a language which was considered central and understood by all. But he has used certain words of different Panjabi dialects which add to its artistic beauty. He makes use of words from Sanskrit and Persian languages also. But he uses words of the different languages according to the thought-content of his writings, appropriate in defining certain spiritual concepts. He has before him a big storehouse of words of different languages. Being conversant with village life, he describes the different professions of the village people. The weavers and carpenters had their specific and important place in that society. Most of the villagers were dependent on them.

Most of the words in the kafis are from the language of North-Western province. This influence makes his kafis more attractive, musical and rhythmical. The letter 'r' makes them more effective, giving them a special identification in literary field. Asadra (mine), Andherri (darkness), Sauharre (in-laws), Paearre (parental), Charakhria (spinning wheel) etc., are the words which make the kafis more artistic. Some words of western Panjab also add to the charm of these kafis such as mendi (mine), Vanjhan (will go), Langhsan (will cross), Hosan (will be), Karesan (will do), Dhosan (will wash), Dekh (to see), etc. Such usage creates a very sweet music and rhythm. This helps him establish himself as a great Sufi poet with distinctiveness.

Shah Husain, being a Muslim Sufi poet, is linked with Islamic religious culture. That influence is far too evident in his poetry. That he makes use of Persian vocabulary and Islamic concepts for his writings is clear from his use of words like Azrail (angel of death), Gor (grave), Mulan (religious man), Kazi (Muslim judge), Munkar and Nakir (angels who keep the record of man's actions, the Qur'an and Rabb (God). The use of Persian and Arabic words like Paak (pure), Sheikh (religious personality), Atish (Fire), Gosha (Corner), Halimi (humility), Murshid (Guide or Teacher), Khudi (ego), Takabari (pride), Mehram (beloved), Frishte (angels), Kamil (perfect), talb (eagerness), Aluda (impure), Fani (mortal), Maratba (status), etc., are found in abundance in the kafis.

The words and concepts not only elucidate the inner-meaning of the kafis, they also help in acquiring spiritual bliss. The influence of Hindi on Shah Husain's language is negligible.

It can be said that the language of his kafis is the language of Panjabi folk. Different words of different languages had been mixed in Panjabi and they were assimilated in it. It is said that the digestive power of Panjabi language is very strong as it has been assimilating the words

and vocabulary of other languages gradually, and in the process, Panjabi language came to be established as a big store-house of different words, yet it remained quite close to the religious, spiritual, social, cultural and aesthetic needs of the people of Panjab.

Shah Husain's poetic form (kafi) received ready approval of the people and the Sufi poets who wrote after him adopted this poetic form to a great extent, primarily due to its lyrical and rhythmical beauty and its acceptance by the masses.

Though written about four hundred years back, these kafis continue to exude the same sweetness and freshness, and their fragrance will always keep the hearts and minds of the readers afresh.

Some Selected Kafis of Shah Husain

I

Rabbā mere hāl dā mehram tun (Rahao)
Andar tun hain bāhar tun hain
Rom Rom vich tun.
Tun hain tānā tun hain bānā
Sab kich merā tun.
Kahe Husain faqīr nimānā
Main māhin sab tun.

(Raga Srirag)

II

Mere sāhibā main teri ho mukīan (Rahao)
Mano nā visārin tun mainu mere sāhibā
Har galon main chukīan
Auganarī nu ko gun nāhin
Bakhs karain tān main chutian
Jion bhāvai teon rākh piariā
Dāvan tere main lukīan.
Je tun nazar mehar dī bhālein
Charh chaubāre main sutīan
Kahe Husain faqīr sain dā
Dar tere dī main kutīan

(Raga Gauri)

I

O God, Thou knowst my condition (pause)
Inside Thou art, and outside also,
Thou art in my pores.
Thou the warp, Thou the woof
Thou art everything to me.
Thou art the Reality, I the shadow
Sayeth Husain faqir.

II

My Lord, I submit to you (Rahao)
forget me not, my Lord
I am low in everything.
I don't have any virtue
Your mercy is my shield.
Keep me as thou wish, my Lord
I am hidden in thy cloak,
If thou art gracious
I can get into penthouse for a sleep
I am a bitch at your door
So sayeth Husain faqir.

III

Sain jināndre val tinā nu gam kaindā ve lokā (Rahao)
Sei bhalian jo Rabb val aian
Jinā nu ishq charokā ve lokā
Ishq-i dī sir khārī chaiā
Dar dar denian hokā ve lokā.
Kahe Husain faqīr sain dā
Ladhā hī prem jharokhā ve lokā
Sain jināndre val
Tina nu gam kaindā ve lokā.

(Raga Assa)

IV

Ik din tainu supnā theesan
Galian bābal vālian vo (Rahao)
Ud gae bhaur phulan de kolon
San patran san dālian
Jit tan lagī soī tan jāne
Hor galan karan sukhālian
Rauh ve Qāzī dil nahion rāzī
Galan hoian tan hoven vālian
Saī rātin lekhai pausan
Jo nāl sāhib de jālian
Naon Husainā te Jāt julāhā
Gālian deindian tānian vālian.

(Raga Assavari)

III

Those who find Thee with them
Need not worry at all. (pause)
Those are the luckiest
Who dwell with Thee since long.
I carry the basket of Love on my head
And hawk at every door
I have found a peephole of His Love
So sayeth Husain faqir.
Those who find Thee with them
Need not worry at all.

IV

The lanes of dear father
Will look like dreams to thee one day (pause)
Drones will fly far away
from flowers, leaves and branches.
Only the wearer knows where the shoe pinches
It is easy to talk otherwise
Oh Qazi, my heart is disturbed
Things have happened as they had to be.
Those nights will be counted
Spent in the company of the groom
Husain by name and weaver by caste
So do Ladies of warp abuse me.

V

Ashiq hovain tan ishq kamāvain (Rahao)
Rāh ishq da suee dā nakā
Tāgā hovain tan jāvain.
Bahar pak andar aaludā
Kiā tun Sheikh kahāvain.
Kahe Husain je farag thee-vain
Tan khās marātbā pavain.

(Raga Assavari)

VI

Sajjan de hath bānh asādī,
Kion kar ākhan chad ve ariā (Rahao)
Raat andherī badal kanian
Bājh vakīlān mushkal banian
Dādhe kitā sad ve ariā.
Ishq muhabat sei jānan
Poī jinā de had ve ariā.
Kalar khatan khuhri
Chinā ret nā gad ve ariā
Nit bharenā en Chatian
Ik din jāsain chad ve ariā
Kahe Husain faqir nimānā
Nain nainā nāl gad ve ariā

(Raga Assavari)

V

Be a lover, and enjoy love (pause)
Path of Love is an eye of a needle
Be a thread to pass.
You are pure from outside, Impure from inside
How can you be called a Shaikh?
High status is for those who have forsaken all
So sayeth Husain faqir.

VI

My lover is holding me by the wrist
How could I ask him to leave. (pause)
Night is dark and cloudy, and it drizzles.
Without a guide not possible to venture out.
He is carefree and calls me.
Only those know of ishq
Who feel it in their heart.
Some dig small well in saline sand
And some sow puny seed in sand
Why engage in unfruitful affairs
Which you will be leaving one day.
Be in love with your Lord
So sayeth faqir Husain.

VII

Ni saio asin nainā de ākhe lagge.
Jinah pāk nigāhān hoīan,
Se kahī nā jānde thagge. (Rahao)
Kāle pat nā chareh safaidī
Kāg nā Theende bagge.
Shah Husain shahādat pain,
Jo mern mītran de agge.

(Raga Gujri)

VIII

Duniyā ton mar jāvana
Vat nā āvnā
Jo kich keeto burā bhalā vo
Keetā apnā pāvanā. (Rahao)
Admion phir murdā keetā,
Mitar piariān terā cholā seetā
Gor manzil paunh-Chāvanā.
Chār dihāre goel vāsā,
Kiā jāne kit dhulsi pāsā,
Bālak man parchāvanā
Chonh janian mīl jholam jholi
Kandhe uthae litā dandā doli
Jangal jae vasāvanā.
Kahe Husain faqīr Rabbānā
Kūr kūrāvā kardā i mānā
Khāqu de vich samavanā.

(Raga Wadhans)

VII

O girl friends, I accepted the advice of eyes
Whose eyes are pure
Can not be deceived.
Crows can not become white/Cranes
It is hard to dye black silk
Those are martyrs who die before the lovers,
So sayeth Husain faqir.

VIII

One has to leave the world
Not to come again
You will reap the harvest
of your bad and good deeds. (Pause)
After life you become corpse
Your nearest ones will sew the robe
And carry you to the brim of grave.
Your short stay is like a traveller
And none knows what will happen.
It is just enjoying like a foolish child
Four persons will carry your palanquin on shoulders
And settle you in the wilderness.
It is false to be proud of being
Unaware that one is to settle in dust
So sayeth Husain faqir.

IX

Rahe vo nāl sajjan de rahe vo (Rahao)
Lakh lakh badian te sau tahne
Sabo sir te sahe vo
Tore sir vanjhe dhar nālon
Tan bhī hāl nā kahe vo
Sukhan jinah dā hove dāru
Hāl uthain kahe vo
Chandan rukh laggā vich vehre
Zor dhigāne khae vo
Kahe Husain faqīr sain dā
Jiwandian mar rahe vo.

(Raga Wadhans)

X

Tinah nu gam kehā sain jinah de val (Rahao)
Sohnī surat dilbar wālī
Rahi akhin vich gal.
Ik pal sajjan judā nā theesai
Baithā andar mal.
Kahe Husain faqīr sain dā
Chalnā aj ke kal.

(Raga Dhanasri)

IX

Live, Live with the groom (pause)
Lakhs of abuses and hundreds of taunts,
All are to be endured.
Even if he breaks the head and severs it from body
I would not reveal my secret.
His words are balm to me
And narrate my plight to none but Him.
A sandal tree has grown in my yard
Why waste energy otherwise.
Die before death,
So sayeth Husain faqir.

X

Those should feel carefree, whose Lord is Always
with them (pause)
Charming face of the groom
Melts in my eyes
He is always present in me
Never separates for a moment
We have to depart today or tomorrow
So sayeth Husain faqir.

XI

Jahan dekho tahan kapt hai
Kahun nā paeo chain
Dagābāz sansār te
Goshā pakar Husain (Rahao)
Man chāhe māhbub ko
Tan chāhe sukh chain
Doe rāje ke seendh main
Kaise bane Husain.

(Raga Tilang)

XII

Ni Tainu Rabb nā bhuli
Duae faqīran de ehā.
Rabb nā bhulī hor sab bhulī
Rabb nā bhulan jehā. (Rahao)
Soinā Rupā sab Chhal vaisī
Ishq nā lagdā lehā.
Hornā nāl hasandī khaidandī
Tainu sauh nāl ghungat kehā
Ishq chaubāre paio jhātī
Hun tainu gam kehā.
Aaie dī saunh bābal dī saunh
Gal changrerī ehā.
Jis joban dā tun māl karendī
So jal bal theesī khehā.
Kahe Husain faqīr saindā
Mamā tāt mālā kehā.

(Raga Tilang)

XI

Where ever you look, you find fraud,
There is no peace.
O Husain faqir, sit in a nook
Far from this treacherous world.
The heart longs for the lover
Body wants comforts and peace
It is difficult for Husain to manage
When the world is ruled by two kings.

XII

Oh girl, do not forget your Lord
This is the prayer of the mystics.
Forget Him not, you may forget everything
Unforgettable is He, your groom. (pause)
Gold, silver, all will vanish
But love does not get briar.
O maid, you laugh and play with others,
Why a veil from the lover.
When you have a glimpse of the upper room of love
You need not be sad.
I swear by my parents
This is the true thing.
The beauty and youth you are proud of
Would wither away and become dust.
Why to be an egoist, when one is to face death,
So sayeth Husain faqir.

XIII

Ithe rehnā nāhin
Koi bāt chalan dī kar vo. (Rahao)
Vade uche mahal usāreo
Gor nimānī ghar vo.
Jis dehī dā tun mān karendī
Jion parchāvain dhar vo
Chor trikhāī pakarhalimī
Bhae sāhib thīn dar vo
Kahe Husain hayātī lorein
Tan maran thīn agge mar vo

(Raga Tilang)

XIV

Bālpan khed lai kurie nī,
Terā aj ke kal muklāvā. (Rahao)
Khenura khidandī kurie
Kan soine dā vālā
Sahurre ghar albat jānā
paeai kurā dāvā
Sāwn māh sarangra āyā
Disan savain talle.
Kahe Husain faqīr sain dā
Aj ae kal challe.

(Raga Tilang)

XIII

Think of departure
This is not a place to live. (pause)
Build not big and high palaces
Humble grave is your abode.
You are proud of this body
Which is like dying shadow
Leave pride, have humility
Be afraid of the Lord
If you want eternity, Die before death,
So sayeth Husain faqir.

XIV

Enjoy your childhood, O girl
you may go with your groom
On second ceremonial visit to the inlaws (pause)
Playing with small ball O'maid,
Wearing Gold ear-ring
Going to the in-laws house is a must.
Staying with parents is false.
Rainy season has come with lovely colours.
Yesterday we came, tomorrow we leave
So sayeth Husain faqir.

XV

Mandī hān ke changī hān
Bhī sāhib terī bandī hān. (Rahao)
Gehlā lok jāne diwānī
Main rang sāhib de rangī hān.
Sajjan merā akhīn vich vasadā
Main galien phīran nishangī hān
Kahe Husain faqīr sain dā
Main var change nāl mangī hān.

(Raga Tilang)

XV

I may be bad or good
I am your servant O'Lord. (pause)
Ignorant people take me for lunatic
But I am dyed in Lord's colour
My groom resides in eyes of mine
In lanes I wander in search of Him
I am betrothed to a sweet groom
So sayeth Husain faqir.

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